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ABSTRACT

In response to identified needs, a specialized graduate level program leading to an M.A. in Social Science was developed jointly by Azusa Pacific College and the Pasadena Unified School District. The goal of this program is to focus on the problems and tensions involved in integrating an entire school community, and to enhance skills of understanding and communication among the majority and various minority groups. Twenty educators who are concerned with and involved in district-wide integration have been selected to participate in this 2-year program. (Author)

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A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE COMMITMENT

TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

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Introduction

For decades the traditional Christian College has focused its attention on the needs of its students and constituency. Since the record of community service has been negligible, it is not surprising that the impact of the institution was hardly recognized. Even in many small communities, the general citizenry may be totally ignorant of the existence of a college.

However, there are compelling social problems in all communities. Problems which respond to an approach which a Christian college is uniquely able to offer. The experience of one college in this process of community service may serve to guide other schools toward a more total community awareness.

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Overview

In response to identified needs, a specialized graduate level program was developed jointly by Azusa Pacific College and the Pasadena Unified School District. The goal of this program is to focus on the problems and tensions involved in integrating an entire school community, and to enhance skills of understanding and communication among the majority and various minority groups. Twenty educators who are concerned with and involved in district-wide integration have been selected to participate in this two-year program.

Program History

Districts such as the Pasadena Unified School District are faced with the urgent task of integrating an entire school community. The process usually presents numerous problems and tensions in the majority culture as well as among the various minority groups.

In order to facilitate this integration task, the Pasadena district has employed a number of educators to work with the office of Intergroup Education. These persons, selected from various ethnic groups, are well acquainted with the problems of their sub-groups. They serve as communication and liaison agents to enhance the flow of information so that the integration program is carried out smoothly. In many respects members of the office of Intergroup Education serve as transitional education specialists--they monitor the transition toward a totally integrated educational community.

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A proposal for a specialized training program for educators serving in this capacity was developed by representatives of the Pasadena District administration office and Azusa Pacific College. The proposal called for a creative cooperative involvement by the college and the district in offering a program leading to the degree of Master of Arts in Social Science with an emphasis in Intergroup Education.

Program Description

The objectives of this cooperative program are:

1. To provide a vehicle for an intensive, in-depth concentration of effort in the study of the psychology of group dynamics, leadership, intergroup education, and attitude formation and change.

2. To focus on the specific issues of integration as they are faced by school districts such as the Pasadena Unified School District.

3. To operate within the current structure of the Azusa Pacific College accredited Master of Arts in Social Science degree.

To best meet these objectives, the program was developed as follows:

1. Instruction began mid-October, 1970 and the program will terminate early in 1972.

2. All instruction will be held at a Pasadena location and all courses will be offered by College faculty.

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3. A minimum enrollment of 12 students must be maintained to insure continuity of the program at the Pasadena site.

4. All academic requirements of the College will be maintained.

5. If a student has completed at least 6 semester units of graduate work in appropriate fields prior to entering this cooperative program, he may complete all requirements and be eligible for the Master of Arts degree in January, 1972.

6. A total of 31 semester units of graduate work is included. Major concentration courses are designed to provide knowledge and skills in: (1) the psychology of group processes, (2) understanding attitude formation and change, (3) the psychology of leadership, and (4) the field of contemporary research and practices in applied behavioral sciences. Additionally, a core of 13 semester units of professional education will provide a background in the psychological and sociological foundations of education as well as an emphasis on the interdisciplinary contributions of the social sciences to contemporary education.

Present Status

Advertisement of the proposed program was restricted to informal contacts. The office of Intergroup Education assisted in encouraging interested persons to inquire. Due to the nature of the program, emphasis was placed on selecting a small group (not to exceed 20) of representatives from various ethnic groups. Although Pasadena Unified

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School District played a major role in developing this program, eligibility for involvement was not restricted to District employees.

Two orientation sessions were held to acquaint potential enrollees with the nature and objectives of the program. College admission standards were presented. From a group of over thirty qualified persons, there were twenty who were ultimately selected for the program.

The first official class session was held Saturday, October 17, 1970. The emphasis was placed upon developing a group cohesiveness and common concern for growth on the part of each member. In order to assist each member to achieve maximum growth and involvement, an attitude inventory was made available. Dr. Everett Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory was voluntarily taken by the group.

Additionally, resource materials and supplies have been placed at the disposal of this group. A video-tape recorder and monitor is available for self-observation of behavior and for viewing pre-recorded sessions and presentations. Recorded audio tapes by prominent psychologists and psychiatrists are on hand. Four hundred current books and journal articles dealing with the psychology of group dynamics and leadership, and the study of attitude formation and change are available. These volumes augment the regular college library holdings.

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The Springboard

The above-described program represents a unique involvement by Azusa Pacific College. Further, it is a logical extension of the institution's commitment to community service, especially in the sense of serving through training in the "helping services". Finally, this is but one of numberless ways the college can commit its resources to benefit contemporary society.

The service potential of this cooperatively developed program seems to indicate at least three implications for a Christian college. The first implication is that the institution must be sensitive to needs in the larger community. Needs can be identified and do provice opportunities for the creative application of college resources.

The second implication is that the college must know its own resources. Resource inventories are often oriented toward internal college utilization with little consideration given to community service potentialities.

Finally, there must be an institutional willingness to serve. There is the possibility that influential persons or groups may not agree with the service thrust. Institutional interest may be misunderstood. Certainly, the involvement in the larger community places the institution in an arena of greater risks.

Institutional sensitivity, knowledge of resources, and willingness to serve were evident in this program. Additionally, the rewards from applying proven tools to this task have encouraged this institution to continue expansion into the arena of community service.